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Discussion papers on water, sanitation and human settlements submitted by major groups

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development,[1] and the decisions of the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development[2] called for strengthened involvement and enhanced participation of major groups in the activities of the Commission on Sustainable Development as well as in the implementation of Agenda 21,[3] the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21[4] and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

2. In response, the Bureau of the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (the review session), building on the participatory practices of the Commission and the World Summit on Sustainable Development,[5] decided that the participation of major groups would be integrated throughout the review session, including panel discussions, expert presentations and ministerial-level discussions. Experts and practitioners from major groups active in the thematic areas of water, sanitation and human settlements would be invited to share their experiences and lessons learned, and to exchange practical approaches in implementation.

3. The organization of the input and contributions of major groups to the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development has been inspired by practices used at past sessions through a multi-stakeholder "steering group" composed of organizing partners from network organizations representing the nine major groups. These organizing partners are: the International Chamber of Commerce, for business and industry; the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (through the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), for workers and trade unions; the Sustainable Development Issues Network (through the Northern Alliance for Sustainability, Third World Network and the Environment Liaison Centre International), for non-governmental organizations; the International Council for

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Local Environmental Initiatives, for local authorities; the International Council for Science and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations, for scientific and technological communities; the Women's Environment and Development Organisation, for women; the Indigenous Peoples' Caucus of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Indigenous Peoples' International Center for Policy Research and Education, the Indigenous Environmental Network, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, for indigenous people; the Youth Caucus of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the National Council of Swedish Youth Organizations, for youth and children; the International Federation of Agricultural Producers, Via Campesina and the International Partners for Sustainable Agriculture, for farmers. These organizing partners facilitated the preparation of the discussion papers contained in the addenda to the present note.

4. The discussion papers reflect the overall views of the major groups on the status of implementation of commitments made related to water, sanitation and human settlements, and include references to cross-sectoral themes, successes and challenges of implementation, as well as practical contributions. These discussion papers will provide a basis for the review inputs of the major groups and will serve as a starting point for their participation in the twelfth session of the Commission.

5. The views and proposed solutions of major groups to meet challenges and overcome problems related to the topics being reviewed should inform the Committee's decisions at its thirteenth session (the policy session), as Governments make use of or endorse them at the negotiation stage and thus allow for meaningful and direct contributions by stakeholder groups to the decisions and work of the Commission.

Notes

[1] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[2] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 9* (E/2003/29).

[3] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I, Resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.

[4] General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex.

[5] Multi-stakeholder participation in the sessions of the Commission became a standard part of the programme of work of the Commission at its sixth session through the launch of the dialogue segment in response to a resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session (June 1997). The Assembly decided that the Commission should strengthen its interaction with representatives of major groups, inter alia, through greater and better use of focused dialogue sessions (see General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex, para. 133 (e)). The dialogue segments launched in 1998 have since been recognized as a unique participatory model for effectively engaging major groups and Governments in a genuine dialogue on specific sustainable development issues.